

10.2.22

Hey Jude: Warnings, Deceptions, and the End Times Certainties from the Book of Jude

Hey Jude, don't make it bad

Take a sad song and make it better

Remember to let her into your heart

Then you can start to make it better

- *Paul McCartney*

Jude 1

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: ² May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. ⁴ For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

⁵ Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and

the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

⁸ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. ⁹ But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰ But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone *the way of Cain*, and for pay they have rushed headlong into *the error of Balaam*, and perished in *the rebellion of Korah*. ¹² These are *the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;* ¹³ *wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.*

¹⁴ It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." ¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen

- Jude, the brother of James and Jesus

Introduction

For this humbled caretaker of human souls, the series Hey Jude might well be the true work of what scripture describes in Isaiah 21:6-12 as "Watchman what time of the night"? Certainly, the warnings, deceptions and end-times certainties of Jude were more than I imagined, and far more than I could have ever hoped for, as spiritually rich and relevant today as any text we have in the Bible. That seems a heavy conclusion, but not one arrived at very easily or carelessly. Nonetheless, I stand on my conclusions (or on the wall as it were) based on the following actualities.

(One) the strength of a comprehensive hermeneutical and interpretive process for the text of Jude.

(Two), a world culture that is currently feeding itself on the weak and innocent in order to satisfy an appetite of insatiable desire and distortion for self-obsession and self-pleasure. This would include the unrighteous compulsion for power and the use of human flesh for all manner of evil (sexual perversion, slavery and trafficking, social experimentation, and the identification and elimination of expendable people groups.

(Three), an undeniable move of the Holy Spirit, leading and confronting me with a present-day revelation of Jude's text. I was drawn in by Jude - I became tethered to Jude - and then in study and prayer led to a contextualized and spiritual understanding of Jude.

Finally, everything that I woke up to for the past three months screamed to me, *Hey Jude, don't make it bad - take this sad song and make it better*. I am certain that I am not channeling my inner Beatle; and I am even more certain that there is a present-day message and mission for you and I to receive and embrace from within the *Warnings, Deceptions, and End Times Certainties of the Book of Jude*.

It is very difficult to deny that we live in a global culture predominantly navigated by the deceived hearts and minds of evil powers and authorities, strengthened by an all-consuming, unchecked, and unrestrained will to gratify the depravity of the flesh.

In smaller circles, very few among us are whom we believe them to be. In larger circles, most among us are precisely who we believe them to be. With the aid of demonic forces

all things absolutely true have been reassigned as untrue. And all things untrue have been reassigned as absolutely “my” truth. The one exception left are those who hold fast to the Gospel of Christ Jesus, who believe the Word of God as their moral authority and singular path to God the Creator and eternal life in Christ Jesus. All of hell has risen against Christ, His Word and those who are true (old definition) believers. The demonic and evil forces, the celebrated deceivers within the Church that threaten and come against us are not metaphorical or figurative – they are literal, they are real. Jude will tell us how to prevail by warning us of the deceptions from within the household of faith that exist, the notable people in which they have existed, and how history and patterns of mankind will repeat themselves. Jude will lead us to conclude that there is indeed an anti-Christ spirit manifested deep within the will and behavior of humankind within and without the Christian Church. To articulate and identify this manifestation with a more concise definition I will use one word - *narcissism*. That one word represents and is embodied in only one spirit – the spirit of the anti-christ. Obsessive and deceptively destructive self-love, that cannot be reconciled to the sacrificial love of God and the servant-like love of one another.

nar·cis·sism | 'nārsəˌsɪz(ə)m |

excessive interest in or admiration of oneself and one's physical appearance and social approval; Psychology of selfishness, involving a sense of entitlement, a lack of empathy, and a need for recognition and admiration, as characterizing a personality type;

Psychoanalysis self-centeredness arising from failure to distinguish the self from external objects and feelings, either in very emotionally immature personalities or as a feature or symptom of mental and emotional disorders.

[Origin/Etymology]

Early 19th century: via Latin from the Greek name Narkissos or Narcissus.

In Greek mythology, Narcissus (/nɑːrˈsɪsəs/; Ancient Greek: Νάρκισσος Nárkissos) was a hunter from Thespieae in Boeotia (modern day Karaburun) who was known for his beauty. According to Tzetzes, Narkissos rejected all romantic advances, eventually falling in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, staring at it for the remainder of his life. After he died, in his place sprouted a flower bearing his name.

The origins of the character *Narcissus* are from Greek Mythology and introduced the term *narcissism*; meaning - *a fixation or obsession with oneself*. This definition, in turn, contributed to the clinical definitions of narcissistic personality disorder, a psychiatric condition marked by grandiosity, excessive need for attention and admiration, and an inability to empathize.

The narcissistic obsession with self and the idea that personal feelings and emotions determine circumstantial and situational reality have been seized upon by the demonic forces of evil and darkness, and are now a cultural gateway to the anti-Christ spirit. As I said earlier, Jude will expose us to where the deceptions of darkness exist and how a deceived ideology and practice remind us of the darkness gone before us. Jude warns us of the consequences of repeating the past, equips us to walk forward right and righteously, and finally blesses and empowers us for the certainties of that which lies ahead. So, Reunion Church, it's here that we are - and it's forward in faith that we go. Hey Jude, may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

- Dr. Stephen Isaac

Authorship, Audience, Literary and Genre Style

Of course, ancient letters differed based on form, context, and content. Jude is seen as one of the canonized collections of written letters that make up the 21 epistles of the

New Testament. The Epistles were intended to influence, instruct, and encourage churches or individuals to persevere and live out the Christian faith during difficult and hostile circumstances. Jude is written to the Christian Church. So not surprisingly, the Epistles all begin with a warm greeting which their authors used to acknowledge the foundation of a relationship and the respect and authority that came with it. Jude's greeting was used as an introduction to not only himself but his credentials and why his words are important and contain value and influence to the Church and those who are following Christ and contending with darkness for their faith.

The recipients know of Jude and his letter is not a *to whom it may concern* – there was both a specific audience and a situational focus. The target audience was a grouping of churches and small group ministries. These communities of faith were more vulnerable to the deception of false teachers and spiritual predators, intended to derail and invalidate their faith in the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

Jude was not one of the original disciples nor was he included with the first group of apostles (*those who were sent*). However, he was the brother of both James and Jesus, Jude was called to the very difficult and dangerous ministry to Jerusalem and certainly recognized as an influencer of mission and authority to the Gospel of Christ. (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3)

Jude's letter was a truth entirely relevant to the early Church attempting to navigate the influence of deceitful, divisive, and dishonest teachers from within, as well as suffering under the weight of hostile persecution from without. The truth of Jude remains entirely relevant for the present-day Church. A Church in great need of a relevant word of truth for that same specific audience, situational focus, and hostile circumstances.

Jude by his own description is a servant of Jesus Christ, meaning he has subjected himself to the authority of the master. It is a significant point to understand that after the resurrection of his brother Jesus, Jude (in true humility) did not promote himself as the brother of Jesus – but rather as servant to his Lord and Messiah. The deeper point of understanding is that the authority to minister is based not on the nepotism of family ties or titles, but more so in surrender to the Lord's claim on those followers, for which the designation "servant of Jesus Christ" makes a more respected and reputable claim.

Jude's title or role within the early Church structure is not specified, but more than likely when wrote or spoke he did so as a well-known key figure within the ministry of the Jerusalem church with James, and certainly in the context of Christian mission and ministry to the unbelieving Jews. Jude's literary Greek was above average, and his letter's pattern seems to suggest that he was reaching out to the vulnerable Christians in Asia Minor. His purpose for writing is clearly missional in its original context. Preaching in primarily a Greek region would require a good command of the language, which he had. Jude was well qualified to address this message to a group of oppressed and at-risk believers and the text clearly remains relevant and insightful in present-day context.

Since the redemptive story of God's people began, true followers of faith have been transformed by the supernatural and divine actions of God. Actions sovereignly planned to unite us in faith and fellowship for an active participation in the work of His kingdom here in this world. Jude gives prominence to these kingdom actions emphasizing the divine origin of this community and the cooperative role of God and Christ in transforming lives and sustaining faith.

Pre-Suppositions and Pre-Conceptions

Since the redemptive story of God's people began, true followers of faith have been transformed by the supernatural and divine actions of God. The work and faith of the historical Church must be studied and recognized as a relative and proven template for both contending and preserving the faith, and preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ. Actions sovereignly planned to unite the Church and Christians from all over the world in faith and fellowship for an active participation in the work of His kingdom here in this present-day. Jude gives prominence to these kingdom actions emphasizing the divine origin of this community and the cooperative role of God and Christ in transforming lives and sustaining faith.

My struggle as well as millions of other Christians living life in western civilization is that our pre-supposed and pre-determined ideas of what contending for the faith and preserving the truth really looks like and what it will ultimately require of those resisting the global push of darkness to finally extinguish the light of Christianity. Far too many have reduced themselves to a social-christianity, baptized into the cultural narcissism of western ideology.

When I read Jude all of my bias towards a western ideology whereby the great God of the Universe, and the almighty Jehovah of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob downloads and implements His every purpose, plan, and blessing through the convenience, comfort, and approval of American Evangelical Christianity. How can I rightly interpret and receive a divine revelation of Jude when I have already pre-determined that his warnings of deception, self-pleasure, resistance to divine sovereignty, and the certain realities of what is to come keep me from His message of truth? My often times narcissistic insistence towards wanting **my truth** and **not His**, is a form of spiritual rebellion (verses 4-16) and keeps me from right and righteous relationship with Him. I am not alone - the American Christian Church finds itself in much of the same deception that Jude

addresses. So it is spiritually healthy to the interpretive process to identify and address those pre-conceptions that we bring to any passage or text.

Pre-Supposition / Pre-Conception One: Immersed in my westernized ideologies and cultural thinking I too have often read a text of the similitude of Jude as it pertains and applies to others and not first myself.

For example: (Verses 16-23)

¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.

¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Pre-Supposition / Pre-Conception Two: Too often I have used my very cloistered and isolated interpretation of "*common salvation*" to exclude those that I deem as not meeting my standards - and yet I know there is indeed a "*common salvation*" that has standards known and judged fully by God and God alone. Is my "*contending for the*

faith" a contention that has always served God's purposes or my own, thereby leading my interpretation to be self-serving and self-promoting (prideful).

For Example: (Verse 3)

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

When I read Jude through the vanity of my obsessive self-love, self-service, and self-pleasing thinking and behavior towards the ungodly desires of my flesh I can no longer understand the reasons why the same God who loves and died for me also says He will one day judge and reward me for how I have lived and how I have loved, for what I have done with what I have been given. By exposing my pre-suppositions and pre-conceptions I can be free to interpret and receive the text from Jude as I should.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Context: (Historical, Biblical, Original Language and Linguistics)

10.9.22

Hey Jude

Authorship, Audience, Literary and Genre Style

Of course, ancient letters differed based on form, context, and content. Jude is seen as one of the canonized collections of written letters that make up the 21 epistles of the New Testament. The Epistles written between 60 and 70 AD, were intended to influence, instruct, and encourage churches or individuals to persevere and live out the Christian faith during difficult and hostile circumstances. Jude is written to the Christian Church in Antioch, Tyre, Damascus, and Jerusalem as well. So not surprisingly, the Epistles all begin with a warm greeting which their authors used to acknowledge the foundation of a relationship and the respect and authority that came with it. Jude's greeting was used as a formal introduction to not only himself but also to his credentials and why his words should be valued and have influence with the first-generation Church and those who were contending with the darkness while contending for their faith.

The recipients know of Jude, and his letter is not a To Whom It May Concern – there was both a specific audience and a situational focus. The target audience was a grouping of churches and small group ministries. These communities of faith looking for the imminent return of Jesus and were more vulnerable to the deception of false teachers and spiritual predators, intended to derail and invalidate their faith in the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

Jude was not one of the original disciples nor was he included with the first group of apostles (those who were sent). However, he was the brother of both James and Jesus, and was called to the very difficult and dangerous ministry to Jerusalem where he was

recognized as an influencer of the mission and authority of the Gospel of Christ. (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3) Jude's letter was a truth entirely relevant to the early Church which was attempting to navigate the influence of the deceitful and divisive teachers who had crept within their walls. They also suffered under the weight of an active and hostile persecution from outside the church walls as well. The truth of Jude remains entirely relevant for the present-day Church. A Church in great need of a relevant word of truth for that same specific audience, situational focus, and hostile circumstances.

Jude by his own description is a servant of Jesus Christ, meaning he has subjected himself to the authority of the master. It is a significant point to understand that after the resurrection of his brother Jesus, Jude (in true humility) did not promote himself as the brother of Jesus – but rather as servant to his Lord and Messiah. The deeper point of understanding is that the authority to minister is based not on nepotism, family ties, or undeserved titles, but more so in surrender to the Lord's claim on those followers, for which the designation "servant of Jesus Christ" makes for a more respected and reputable claim to authority.

Interestingly, Jude's title or role within the early Church structure is not specified, but more than likely when he wrote or spoke, he did so as a well-known figure within the ministry of the Jerusalem church along with his brother James, and certainly within the context of Christian mission and ministry to the unbelieving Jews. Jude's use and lexicon of literary Greek was above average, and his letter's pattern seems to suggest that he was reaching out to the vulnerable Christians in Asia Minor (Antioch, Tyre, Damascus, and Jerusalem) with a genuine sense of urgency. In its original context his purpose for writing is clearly a missional message - warn, expose, correct, encourage, and build faith. For present-day followers, Jude will expose deception within the Church that comes

from the predictable patterns of pop-cultured and narcissistic false teachers. He will also challenge and equip biblically illiterate and undisciplined Christians.

The alternative strategy and solutions Jude concludes with are the following:

- Adhere to a biblically sound Common Salvation and Contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints
- Practice Sincere Obedience to the Gospel and Commands of Christ
- Prioritize Righteous Living and Godly Morals
- Pray in the Spirit - Extend Mercy to those who Doubt - Live Life in Love of
- God and Gods Creation - Save those AT RISK - Despise the Garment of
- Flesh

Using a true apostolic alternative to false teaching, Jude shows that God is the one who “keeps” us—he preserves us Christians in his love; a love that brings joy that far surpasses any temporary pleasures (Jude 1, 21, 24). In one sense we keep ourselves faithful, “contending for the faith” (Jude 3; 20–21); at the same time, we know that it is God who keeps us faithful (Jude 24). This discovery gives us the ability to be merciful to those who doubt—to extend to them the offer that God wishes to rescue them, no matter where they currently stand within the spectrum of faith (Jude 22–23). We can take a stand—in the realization that it is ultimately Christ who gives us the strength to stand; everything is in his mercy.

As we said earlier, preaching in primarily a Greek speaking region would require a good command of the language, which he had. Jude was well qualified to address this

message to a group of oppressed and at-risk believers needing to become disciples clearly making his text relevant and most insightful for present-day context.

Pre-Suppositions and Pre-Conceptions

Since the redemptive story of God's people began, true followers of faith have been transformed by the supernatural and divine actions of God. The work and faith of the historical Church must be studied and recognized as a relative and proven template for both contending and preserving the faith, as well as preaching and teaching the Gospel of Christ. Actions sovereignly planned to unite the Church and Christians from all over the world in faith and fellowship for an active participation in the work of His kingdom here in this present-day. Jude gives prominence to these kingdom actions emphasizing the divine origin of this community and the cooperative role of God and Christ in transforming lives and sustaining faith.

My struggle is similar to millions of other Christians living life in western civilization where our pre-supposed and pre-determined ideas of what contending for the faith and preserving the truth really looks like is jaded and in most cases has been de-emphasized by the Church. So much so that what it will ultimately cost and require of those resisting the push towards global darkness and extinguishing the light of Christianity is no longer part of the Gospel message. Far too many have reduced themselves to a social-Christianity, baptized into the cultural narcissism of western ideology.

When I read Jude all of my bias towards a western ideology downloads into my mind and spirit - to the place where my human will resides. The download is simply this: the common belief that the great God of the Universe, and the almighty Jehovah God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is obligated to implement His every purpose, plan, and prosperous blessing through the convenience, comfort, and approval of American Evangelical Christianity.

If this is true, how then can I rightly interpret and receive a revelation of Jude when I have already pre-determined that his warnings of deception, self-gratifying pleasure, resistance to divine sovereignty, and the certain realities of what is to come keep me disconnected from His message of truth? My often times narcissistic insistence towards wanting my truth and not His, is a form of spiritual rebellion (verses 4-16), and that rebellion keeps me from right and righteous relationship with Him. I am not alone in this pre-supposition - the American Christian Church finds itself in much of the same deception that Jude addresses in his text. So it is spiritually healthy to the interpretive process to identify and address those pre- conceptions that we bring to any passage or text before we begin any process of interpreting and rightly dividing biblical text.

Pre-Supposition / Pre-Conception One:

Immersed in my westernized ideologies and cultural thinking I too have often read a text of the similitude of Jude as it pertains and applies to others and not first myself.

For Example: (Verses 16-23)

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to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts." ¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. ²² And have mercy on some, who are doubting; ²³ save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

Pre-Supposition / Pre-Conception Two:

Too often I have used my very cloistered and isolated interpretation of "common salvation" to exclude those that I deem as not meeting my spiritual and moral standards – and yet I know there is indeed a "common salvation" that has made its biblical standards and expectations fully known and judged by God, and God alone. Is my "contending for the faith" a contention that has always served God's purposes or my own, thereby leading my interpretation the bible to be self-serving and self-promoting (prideful), and obsessively self-loving? For Example: (Verse 3) "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."

When I read Jude through the vanity of my obsessive self-love, self- service, and self-pleasing thoughts and behavior towards the ungodly desires of my flesh I can no longer understand the reasons why the same God who loves and died for me also says He will one day judge and reward me for how I have lived, how I have loved, and for what I

have done with what He has given me. By exposing my pre-suppositions and pre-conceptions I can be spiritually free to interpret, receive, and obey the text from Jude as I should.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Why Jude's Text Must Transform Our Lives

The Holy Spirit will also reveal to us through Jude's message and meaning that despite how strong we may think we are, we are all vulnerable to false teaching and systematic conformity to cultural trends. To effectively eliminate wrong or unrighteous presuppositions or pre-conceptions we start with fierce honesty: Is this biblical, or is this cultural? Is this cultural, or is this biblical? One may be right yet not be righteous. But if one is righteous, one will always be right. Unlike those who despise Christianity and mock the Gospel of Christ Jesus, we have the Word and the Spirit to guide us and other genuine followers to hold us accountable (Jude 17–19).

We are not alone.

We must stay immersed in God's love not only for our own sake, but also to expose the deception around us, so that others will not fall away. Jude is clear that judgment

certainly awaits those who lead others astray in the church; we can have confidence in that. Our job is merely to expose falseness by contending for the faith—and offering the alternative of the authentic Jesus.

Jude's letter shines light on the characteristics of evil teaching and leaders who care only for themselves: Jude shows us that false teachers follow their own desires and show favoritism to gain advantages (Jude 12–16). Over and against these values, true followers of Jesus are characterized by the biblical virtues and ethic of mercy, peace, and love (Jude 2); true Christians serve first - helping to save others from falling away (Jude 22–23).

To review and repeat; at the end of his letter, Jude tells us all: Build yourselves up in Christian faith. Pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in the love of God. Wait expectantly for eternal life. Have compassion on those who doubt. Save all you can from leaving their faith. Turn away from those who will pull you away from God (Jude 20–23). True Christians do not live for themselves - we belong to another; we are "slaves (bought with a price) of Jesus Christ," so that as many people as possible may be saved by Jesus working through those who have surrendered their lives to Him.

10.16.22

Hey Jude

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My struggle is quite similar to the millions of other Christians living life in western civilization where our pre-supposed and pre-determined ideas of what contending for the faith and preserving the truth really looks like is now jaded and in most cases has been de-emphasized by the Church. So much so that what it will ultimately cost and require of those resisting the push towards global darkness and extinguishing the light of Christianity is no longer part of the Gospel message or discipleship process. Far too many have reduced themselves to a social-christianity, baptized into the toxic cultural narcissism of western ideology.

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prosperous blessing through the convenience, comfort, and approval of American Evangelical Christianity.

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Too often I have used my very cloistered and isolated interpretation of "common salvation" to exclude and not include those that I determined as not meeting my spiritual and moral standards - and yet I know there is indeed a shared "common salvation" that has made its biblical standards and expectations fully known - and those biblical standards and expectations are singularly judged by God, and God alone. It is appropriate then to ask the assessing question, "Has my contending for the faith always served God's purposes and kingdom or my own, thereby leaving my interpretation of the scripture to be self-serving, self-promoting (prideful), and even self-guided"?

[Example:] *Verse 3*

"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."

When I read Jude verse three through the vanity of my self-love, self-guided thoughts, and selfish behavior bent towards the ungodly desires of my flesh, I push away any honest self-examination and the need for a biblical moral authority over my life and love. I shut out the voice of the Spirit and any and every call to reset myself and my behavior towards the righteousness of God. The only voice I hear is the one which feeds and fulfills the desire I am experiencing in the moment, and the impulses of my flesh and human will. I no longer want to hear about warnings, deceptions, and biblical

certainties such as Jude's or any other for that matter. Under this determination and condition, I no longer want to hear the reasons why the same God who loves and died for me also says He will one day judge and reward me for how I have lived, how I have loved, and for what I have done with what He has given me. Conversely, by exposing my pre-suppositions and pre-conceptions I can be spiritually free to interpret, receive, and obey the text from Jude or any other as God inspired and as the author intended.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Why Jude's Text Must Transform Our Lives

The Holy Spirit will also reveal to us through Jude's message and meaning that despite how strong we may think we are, we are all vulnerable to false teaching and systematic conformity to cultural trends.

[Example:] There exists a deception of darkness and a conformity to the ways of the world when the following takes place.

- The lines between what is right to us - and what is righteous to God are continually erased.
- The lines between what is fair to us - and what is just to God are redefined by the narrative of man rather than the biblical principles of God.
- The lines between what is emotive truth to us - and revealed truth to God are determined by our preferred feelings.

- The lines between rendering and surrendering are extraneous, rendering of our will to the human to the imagination and authority of man or surrendering of our will to the creative design and authority of God.
- The lines are fluid and variable.

To effectively eliminate wrong or unrighteous presuppositions or pre-conceptions we start with fierce honesty: Is this biblical, or is this cultural? Is this cultural, or is this biblical? One may be right yet not be righteous. But if one is righteous, one will always be right. Unlike those who despise Christianity and mock the Gospel of Christ Jesus, we have the Word and the Spirit to guide us and other genuine followers to hold us accountable (Jude 17–19). We are not alone.

We must stay immersed in God's love not only for our own sake, but also to expose the deception around us, so that others will not fall away. Jude is clear that judgment certainly awaits those who lead others astray in the church; we can have confidence in that. Our job is merely to expose falseness by contending for the faith—and offering the alternative of the authentic Jesus.

Jude's letter shines light on the characteristics of heretical teaching and leaders who care only for themselves: Jude shows us that false teachers follow their own desires and show favoritism to gain advantages (Jude 12–16). Over and against these values, true followers of Jesus are characterized by the biblical moral virtues and ethics of mercy, peace, and love and honesty (Jude 2); true Christians serve first - helping to save others from falling away (Jude 22–23).

To review and preview; at the end of his letter, Jude will tell us all:

- **Adhere to a biblically sound Common Salvation and Contend for the Faith once Delivered to the Saints**
- **Practice Sincere Obedience to the Gospel and Commands of Christ**
- **Prioritize Righteous Living and Godly Morals**
- **Pray in the Spirit - Extend Mercy to those who Doubt - Live Life in Love of God and God's Creation - Save those AT RISK - Despise the Garment of Flesh**

True Christians do not live for themselves - we belong to God, and then to love and serve one another; we are "slaves (bought with a price) of Jesus Christ," so that as many people as possible might be saved by the redemptive work of Jesus in those who have surrendered their lives to Him.

10.23.22 /10.30.22

Hey Jude

Context: (Historical, Biblical, and Literary)

Historical Context

In interpreting and understanding biblical text historical, biblical, and literary context is most essential. We do not know much about Jude or his life. However, there is more than enough historical information about Jude to set a context for when he wrote, why he wrote, and to whom he wrote one of the more theologically rich epistles of the New Testament.

There are two lists of Jesus' family found in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, and "Judas/Jude" is listed as the last among the four brothers of Jesus - James, Joseph, and Simon; with Jude's "sisters" interspersed among them. So, Jude could have been four or more siblings removed from Jesus, meaning it is more than likely that he was a teenager when Jesus died. It is also true that Jude and his brothers were unbelievers during Jesus' life according to John 7:5 and Mark 3:21, and like James he may have been converted during a resurrection appearance of Jesus as was mentioned by Paul his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:7).

Acts 1:14 tells us that Mary "and the brothers of Jesus" were part of the 120 gathered in the upper room during the time between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost, so they were all believers by then. 1 Corinthians 9:5 tells us that Jesus' brothers engaged in the same type of apostolic missionary work as Paul, and that likely included Jude. Based on this epistle, Jude had become an influential leader in the church, based on the distinct tone of authority in this letter. According to early Church historian Eusebius (History 3.19-20), his family continued in the faith and served the Lord, and there is historical evidence

that his grandsons were arrested and forced to appear before the emperor Domitian to answer for their loyalty to Rome.

Biblical Context

It is obvious that Jude is one of the more concise epistles in the New Testament, and yet it does contain as we will find, personal invitations from the author to be challenged by very deep and intense theological perspectives.

For example: In verses 20–21 Jude invites, *“Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit ... await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ ... keep yourselves safe in God’s love.”* Each of those invitations are theologically deep and spiritually intense even in our room here today.

But what theological context and invitation do you hear from Jude in those two short verses?

Jude's invitation is threefold: Pray in the Power - Await the Mercy - Keep Yourselves Safe

Jude's theological context is also threefold - Trinitarian: Power of the Holy Spirit - Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ – The Safety and Security in God's Love

We can see what is evident from statements such as this is the understanding and awareness of the significant presence and role of each Divine Person of the Trinity as they purposefully manifest (come to life) themselves in the lives of those in the Christian community. Jude refers to The Holy Spirit only in verse 19, and although the least mentioned it is not an indication of the Spirit's value and priority. Jude will say to us that people who are false teachers and heretics in fact, do not have the Holy Spirit. And that

Bible believing Christians should value and prioritize the working and presence of the Spirit when we pray and worship (Spirit and in Truth). While the false teachers may claim to trend spiritually and possess a revelation from God behind their theories and beliefs, Jude makes it clear that the presence of the Spirit is the line of distinction between what is merely a skill set of man and an actual move and manifestation of God. Jude will also conclude that it is the truly faithful to God, and not charismatic and controlling leaders, that are the inspired and led by Him.

Here is another deep and intense Biblical context that Jude brings to his audience.

God is Central to the Work of the Spirit

The love of God opens the epistle (verse 1) and God as "Savior" closes the epistle (verse 25). God is our Father (verse 1), His "grace" defines salvation in contrast to the perversion of it by the false teachers (verse 4), and the love of God preserves us (verse 21). As God the Savior, He not only "keeps" us here and now (moment to moment) in the present, but in the future He will "bring" or deliver us into His eternal "presence." Jude will tell his audience, that God's essential and central presence in our temporal lives assures us of the security and comfort of His love and sustaining grace but also the central presence of God grants us welcome and access to the eternal life that God and God alone gives us through the sacrifice and redemption of Yeshua, Christ Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, God is deserving of our praise, honor, and glory (verses. 24–25).

It should not be surprising then that through the power of the Holy Spirit it is Christ Jesus who permeates Jude's epistle. In his opening salutation, Jude (in true humility) presents himself as the "slave of Jesus Christ" (verse 1), indicating that Jesus was his

Master and Lord. The Lordship and authority of Christ Jesus was the very thing the false teachers were denying (verse 4). Our biblical truth and context for our Christian faith is validated in that Jesus is at all times the sovereign and cosmic (universal) Lord, standing alongside God and has been given dominion over all creation. True biblical theology must begin and end by acknowledging the Lordship and authority of Jesus. In fact, Jude describes the return of Jesus in verses 14–15 by quoting from 1 Enoch 1:9.

[The Book of Enoch (*Hebrew; maṣḥafa hēnok*) is an ancient Hebrew apocalyptic religious text, ascribed by tradition to Enoch, the great-grandfather of Noah. The writings of Enoch are considered one of the oldest pieces of Biblical literature ever discovered]

The context here is regarding God's coming in judgment, transforming Enoch's vision of a manifestation of God into a promise revealing the *Parousia*: The Lord God the Messiah is coming.

As Lord, Jesus will be eschatological judge and will destroy all false-teachers and heretics for their blasphemy and immorality. Jude's letter is framed by Jesus' power to keep the faithful safe—God's preservation of his people will be conducted in "Jesus Christ" (verse 1), and that protection and presentation at the end-times judgment will occur "through Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 25). In fact, Jude presents Jesus as the one who "rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt" (verse 5), as a precursor and type and shadow of Jesus delivering his people now.

In completion (He is enough), it is "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 21) that will "bring you eternal life." Throughout Jude the work of God (preserving, coming, judging, bringing eternal life) is conducted and under the authority and mercy of Christ.

Sin and salvation are another primary theological theme in Jude. It is important to acknowledge that two primary problems are stressed in Jude:

First - The rejection of the sovereignty of God and Christ (verse 4)

Second - Giving in and giving up to the compulsive desire of our flesh (verse 4, 16, 19)—perversion, greed, and slander.

Jude contends that these sins “contaminate” or “pollute” the lives of those who commit them (verse 23). The result of that kind of moral depravity will be “condemnation” (verses 4, 6, 15) and certain “destruction” (verses 5, 10–11, 23). And yet, God through Christ has shown mercy (verses 2, 21–23) by providing salvation and allowing his people to rescue such from the “flames of judgment” (verse 23). Salvation means to embrace the faith entrusted once to all and for all time (verse 3) and the “marvelous grace” of God (verse 4), to dwell in the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 20), and to center on the assurance and security to be found only in Christ (verses 1, 21, 24).

The final aspect of Jude's Biblical and historical context is demonstrated within the same kind of final eschatology (death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul) found in 2 Peter. Again, two aspects are emphasized.

First - the final judgment of God is stressed throughout: The fallen angels are imprisoned, “waiting for the great day of judgment” (verse 6), and Sodom and Gomorrah were “destroyed by fire” to “serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God’s judgment” (verse 7). The final destruction of the false teachers (verses 10–11, 13) the anti-typical of these judgments, and when the adherents are rescued, they are “snatched... from the flames of judgment” (verse 23).

Second - God's final judgment will take place in accordance with the second coming of the Christ Jesus the Messiah, with his holy angels (verses 14–15). At that return, which is awaited by the saints, God's "mercy" will bring "eternal life" (verse 21) and bring the faithful "into his glorious presence" (verse 24).

11.6.22

Text Analysis: (Identifying Key Words, Conclusive Phrases, Sentences, Main and Subordinate Clauses, Greek and Hebrew Idioms)

[Verse 1-3]

Servant of Jesus Christ: [Grk] doulos; As we have said, Jude did not identify himself as Jesus' brother but rather as his "slave or servant". For Jude, being recognized as a servant of Jesus was more significant than being brother. It was Jude's honor and privilege to give his life in service to his Lord. In context, the term "servant" was a title of honor in the company of such great leaders of Israel called the same: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, and such. Authors of the New Testament epistles commonly labeled themselves and others "slaves or servants of Christ". As a title of distinction, it meant they were part of God's divine family and official envoys of Christ the Messiah (Kingly). The higher the social status of one's master, the weightier the power of the representing servant. Since Jude is the serving-ambassador of Jesus Christ ... we should understand his self-designation as a claim to authority, divine commission, and perhaps even inspiration.

Common Salvation: [Grk] kolvok; mutually shared and agreed upon; commonly held and preserved by two or more. The eternal salvation preached and disciplined as per the Gospel of Christ Jesus. It is this tenet of the Christian faith we commonly agree, protect, and share.

Acts 4:11-12

Houtos eimi ho lithos, ho exoutheneo hypo si ho oikodomos, ho ginomai eis kephale gonia. Kai eimi ho soteria en ou oudeis allos gar, eimi oude heteros onoma hypo ho ouranos ho didomai en anthropos en hos ego dei sozo.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Contend Earnestly for the Faith: [Grk] epagonizomai ho pistis; to engage in an intense spiritual and strategic struggle against opposers and enemies of biblical doctrine, faith in God, and the active belief and practice Gospel of Christ Jesus. Jude was calling not for a mere defense of the faith, but for a concerted righteous struggle to defeat the false teachers; this was offense more than defense. In addition, this was not just a negative fight (name-calling, character attacks) to defeat the heretics - but rather Jude calls for a concerted effort to disciple, equip, build up, and safeguard the community of Christ (verses 20–21), as well as to rescue (bring back) those endangered and deceived by the heresy and false teaching that had infiltrated the first century Church.

The object of this intense effort is “the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.” “The faith” [Grk; tē ... pistei] does not refer to subjective trust in God but to the full content of Christian truth and teaching (Romans 10:8; Galatians 1:23; Ephesians 4:13), tantamount to the gospel “Entrusted” literally is “handed down, passed on” and speaks of traditional truths passed from one generation to the next (1 Corinthians 11:2; Colossians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:2), in this case, from God to the apostles to the church. The stress on these doctrines being transmitted “once for all” underscores the eternal nature of God’s truth and contrasts it with the novel, false teachings of these heretics.

11.13.22/11.20.22

Text Analysis: (Identifying Key Words, Conclusive Phrases, Sentences, Main and Subordinate Clauses, Greek and Hebrew Idioms)

[Verse 1-3]

Servant of Jesus Christ: [Grk] *doulos*; As we have said, Jude did not identify himself as Jesus' brother but rather as his "slave or servant". For Jude, being recognized as a servant of Jesus was more significant than being brother. It was Jude's honor and privilege to give his life in service to his Lord. In context, the term "servant" was a title of honor in the company of such great leaders of Israel called the same: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, and such. Authors of the New Testament epistles commonly labeled themselves and others "slaves or servants of Christ". As a title of distinction, it meant they were part of God's divine family and official envoys of Christ the Messiah (Kingly). Some things never change in the ego-centric value system of men - the higher the social/political/wealth/religion/celebrity status of one's master, the weightier the power of the representing servant. Since Jude is the serving-ambassador of Jesus Christ ... we should understand his self-designation as a claim to authority, divine commission, and perhaps even inspiration. He considered himself a servant of his master, Jesus - Messiah.

Matthew 10:10-12

Mede kaleo kathegetes, hoti sy eimi heis kathegete ho Christos. De ho megas sy eimi sy diakanos. De os tis ypsos autos tapeinoo kai hostis tapeinos autos hypsoo.

Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Common Salvation: [Grk] *kolvok*; a belief in, in the interest of, the main principle to, the tenets of, for the cause of, mutually shared and agreed biblical doctrine upon which; commonly held and preserved by two or more. Our eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, preached and disciplined as per the Gospel of the same. It is this tenet of the Christian faith we commonly agree, protect, and share. Salvation only comes to us in God the Son - Christ Jesus. All authority, unity, and dominion rests in Him according to the will and righteous pleasure of God the Sovereign Father.

Acts 4:8-12

Houtos Iesous eimi ho lithos, ho exoutheneo hypo si ho oikodemos, ho ginomai eis kephale gonias. Kai eimi ho soteria en ou oudeis allos gar, eimi oude heteros onoma hypo ho ouranos ho didomai en anthropos en hos ego dei sozo.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Contend Earnestly for the Faith: [Grk] *epagonizomai ho pistis*; to engage in an intense spiritual and strategic struggle against opposers and enemies of biblical doctrine, faith in God, and the active belief and practice Gospel of Christ Jesus. Jude was not calling merely for a rhetorical defense of the faith, but for a concerted unified and relentless struggle to defeat the false teachers; this was a call to an offensive advance more than a defensive stand. No quiet-quitting. Moreover, this was not just a negative fight (Name-calling, mean tweets, character attacks) to defeat the heretics but rather Jude calls for a concerted righteous effort to disciple, equip, build up, and safeguard the community of Christ (verses 20–21), as well as to rescue (bring back) those endangered and deceived by the heresy and false teaching that had infiltrated the first century Church. Teach God's truth.

The object of this intense effort is “the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.” “The faith” [Grk; *tē ... pistei*] does not refer to subjective trust in God but to the full content of Christian truth and teaching.

Romans 10:8-9

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Ephesians 4:12-16

...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the

fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

The resonating word from Paul is the word "entrusted." This carries a very specific semantic range. It is comparable to the word "imparted", which is an active and continual teaching process which requires that teacher's model and live their valued traditions and tenets of faith by example; "handed down, passed on" and speaks of traditional truths passed from one generation to the next. To your children, and to your children's children. The faith once and for all delivered to the saints...

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

In this case, from God to the apostles to the church. The stress on these doctrines or tenets of faith being transmitted "once for all" underscores the eternal nature of God's truth and contrasts it with the novel, false teachings of these heretics.

2 Timothy 1:13-14

Eche hypotyposin hygiano logos hos akouo para ego, en pistis kai agape ho en Christos Iesous. Dia Hagios Pneuma ho enoikeo en ego, phylasso ho kalos paratheke.

Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.